

PLANNING A RECOVERY EVENT

TOOLKIT



Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
North Dakota Department of Human Services
1237 West Divide Avenue, Suite 1C
Bismarck, ND 58501
www.nd.gov/dhs/services/mentalhealth



This September marks the 25th annual celebration of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**, an observance that increases awareness and understanding of mental health and substance use disorders. This year's theme, "**Join the Voices for Recovery: Speak Up, Reach Out**," encourages people to openly discuss mental and substance use disorders and the reality of recovery. It aims to foster public understanding and acceptance of behavioral health conditions.

The Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse invites you to plan a Recovery Event in your community!

Why plan a recovery event?

By involving your community in your advocacy and recovery celebrations, together we can help change public perceptions of recovery, promote effective public policy and demonstrate that recovery is a reality for millions of Americans. Events like rallies, runs, walks, sober social events or other activities can educate people in your community about long-term recovery, engage kids and families in community-wide events, and demonstrate the joy and new life that goes along with recovery.

TOOLKIT DIRECTORY:

- ✓ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
- ✓ APPLICATION
- ✓ RECOVERY BILL OF RIGHTS
- ✓ CREATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- ✓ PLANNING YOUR RECOVERY EVENT
 - RECOVERY WALK -- COMMUNITY MEETING -
- ✓ USING THE MEDIA
- ✓ RESOURCES



Recovery Events are the cornerstone of Recovery Month.
Holding an event can be an exciting and important way to make a difference in your community. The impact your organization can have by spreading a lasting message of recovery throughout your community can go beyond measure.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the specific requirements of a Recovery Event?

Provide a platform to:

- Celebrate people in recovery and their loved ones
- Laud those contributions of treatment and service providers
- Promote the message that prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover.
- Encourage effective public policy

What is the maximum amount per stipend?

\$500

When does the Recovery Event need to be held?

The Official Recovery Month is September; however, you can hold your event at any time.

What are the requirements associated with receipt of the stipend?

- 1. Utilize the grant as indicated on the application.
- 2. Promote the event in the community through advertising and media, identifying the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a sponsor by including the DHS Logo.
- 3. Post the event on the SAMHSA Recovery Month website. http://www.recoverymonth.gov/.
- 4. Submit a short report to DMHSA within 30 days of the event using a report template provided.

When is the application due?

August 8th

How does an organization apply?

Complete the application and forward to:

Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Attention: Recovery Event Mini Grants 1237 W. Divide Avenue, Suite 1C Bismarck, ND 58501

How will agencies receive notice of grant acceptance?

The Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse will review the applications and notify all applicants by the e-mail address listed on the application.

For additional questions, contact the Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at 701-328-8920





Recovery Event Mini Grant Application

Name of Agency:	
	Payment will be written to identify agency
Contact Person:	
Address:	
Email:	
Telephone:	
Describe the Recovery Event you have planned:	
Date & Location of Event:	
\$ Amount of Request (maximum - \$500):	
My agency agrees to comply with the following:	(please initial)
Provide a platform to:	
 Celebrate people in recovery and their loved one 	es
 Laud those contributions of treatment and service 	ce providers
 Promote the message that prevention works, tree 	eatment is effective and people can and do recover.
 Encourage effective public policy 	
Post the event on the SAMHSA Recovery Mor	nth website. http://www.recoverymonth.gov/
Promote the event in the community through a	
sponsor by including the DHS Logo in all adve	
Submit a report to DMHSA within 30 days of the	· ·
Signature of Applicant	Date

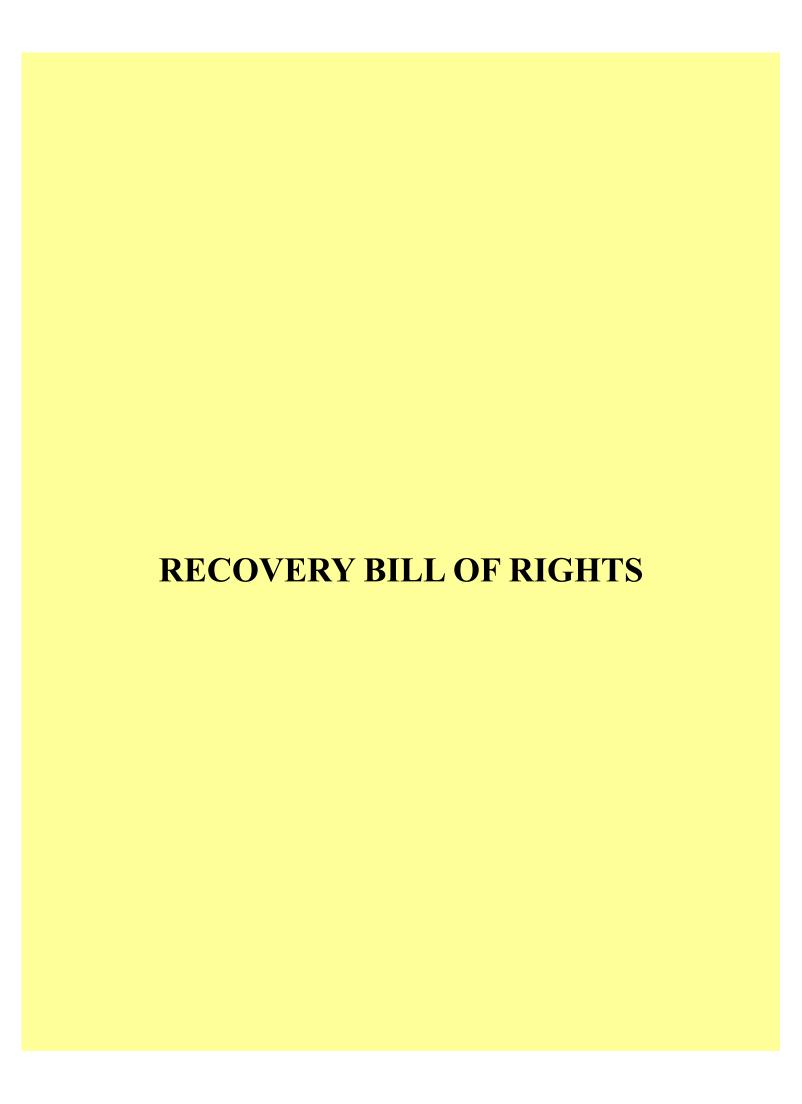




Recovery Event Report

Name of Event:	
Name of Event:	
Date & Location of Event:	
# Attended Event:	
	recovery and their loved ones, laud those iders, promote the message that prevention works o recover, and encourage effective public policy.
Describe how the event was in the commun	ity using advertising and media?
Describe how the event was in the commun	ity using advertising and media?
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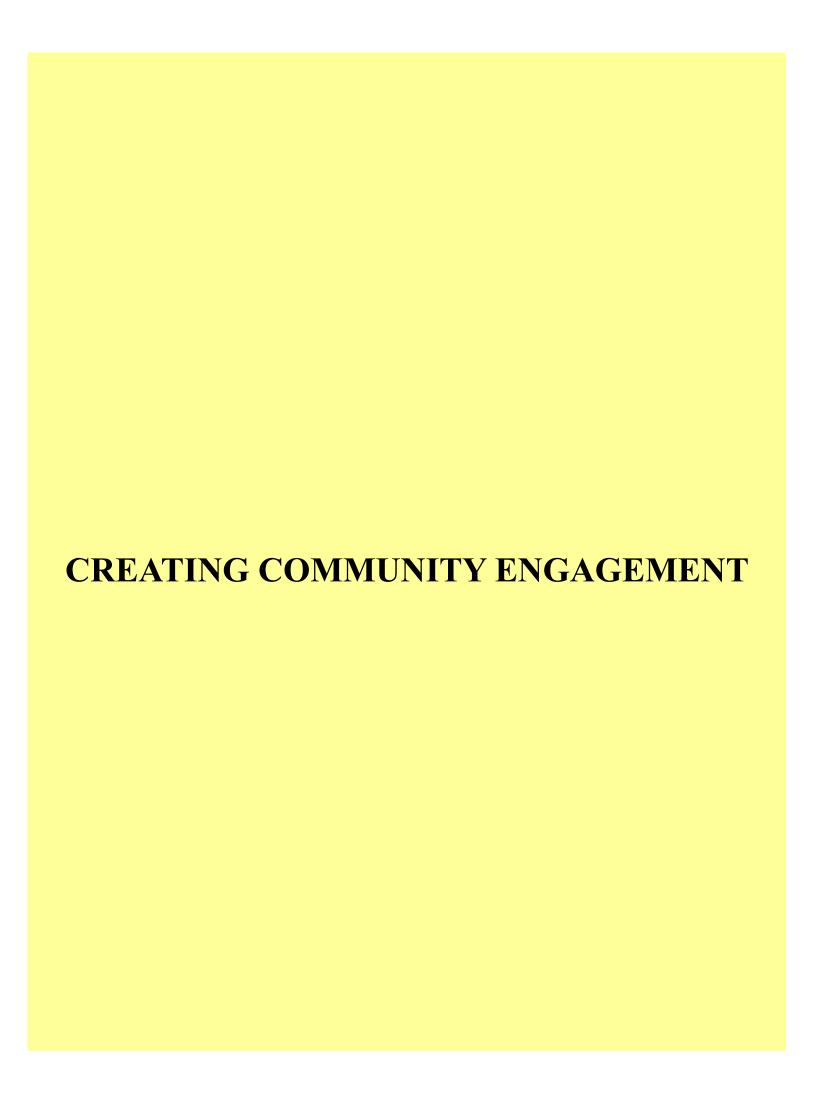


RECOVERY BILL OF RIGHTS

- 1) We have the right to be viewed as capable of changing, growing
- 2) We have the right—as do our families and friends—to know about the many pathways to recovery, the nature of addiction
- 3) We have the right, whether seeking recovery in the community, a physician's office, treatment center, or while incarcerated, to set our own recovery goals
- 4) We have the right to select services that build on our strengths
- 5) We have the right to be served by organizations or health care and social service providers that view recovery positively
- 6) We have the right to be considered as more than a statistic
- 7) We have the right to a health care and social service system that recognizes the strengths and needs of people seeking recovery
- 8) We have the right to be represented by informed policymakers
- 9) We have the right to respectful, nondiscriminatory care from doctors
- 10) We have the right to treatment and recovery support in the criminal justice system
- 11) We have the right to speak out publicly about our recovery

The entire Recovery Bill of Rights is available at: www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/campaigns/bill_of_rights.php





EDUCATORS

Teachers have a unique opportunity to be a positive adult influence in the lives of students. They are also well-respected members in the community.

Students may be dealing with their own problems, have friends with alcohol or other drug problems, or be a child of someone with addiction. School can be a place for students to learn about ways to find the help they need and have a safe place to express their feelings. Teachers can organize a forum or assembly where students can discuss what's happening in their lives around alcohol and other drugs and learn about recovery resources and treatment options, such as help in a doctor's office, in-patient treatment programs, 12-step meetings, counseling, the faith community, etc.

Action Steps:

- Organize programs and provide guidance for teachers and speakers for assemblies
 - To help students understand addiction and recovery
 - Living with family members with addiction
 - What it means to be in recovery as a young person
 - Make sure to keep school administrators and teachers informed about events or activities that students may want to participate in
 - Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to local schools [school nurses are a great place to start] and your board of education

FAITH COMMUNITY

It is very common for people in recovery or seeking recovery to look to the faith community for spiritual leadership and guidance. Through congregational activities, the faith community can create awareness, educate the congregation and support recovery and the recovery community.

Often religious leaders may honor people in recovery as an example of their spiritual journey and their strength and commitment to their recovery path. The faith community offers tremendous resources and has partnered with many organizations in recovery activities or events.

In some communities, faith leaders and clergy have been holding "Recovery Weekends" where religious leaders of all denominations make recovery part of their services. Many of these weekends are help during Recovery Month in September. Sermons and homilies include discussions about the importance of early intervention, treatment, and recovery and how it can positively influence families and life in the community. Faith leaders can help their members better understand addiction and recovery and encourage parishioners to get help. For more information, contact Faith Partners (rushcenter.org/faith approach/fags.aspx) or the National Association for Children of Alcoholic's Faith Initiative (www.nacoa.org).

- Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to faith-based organizations and houses of worship
- Invite faith organizations and faith leaders to attend your events such as community meetings and public policy panels or to be a speaker at an event
- Offer a workshop to faith-based organizations to educate the leaders about addiction and long-term recovery resources that are available in your area and through your organization
- Develop and share materials and information with clergy for use in sermons and events





COMMUNITY COALITIONS

Joining in existing coalitions or building a new one in your community to support recovery can expand support for new attitudes and policies, making recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs a higher priority in your city/town. There are hundreds of anti-drug coalitions around the country and information on them can be found at www.cadca.org.

Action Steps:

- Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to the community coalition in your town
- Invite community coalition members to participate in your Recovery Month events
- Invite coalition members to sponsor and participate in community meetings and other activities
- Encourage coalition members to think about recovery as a prevention strategy

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

It is important to reach out to the families and loved ones of people seeking recovery—they often have questions and need answers and support to understand what's going on in their own lives and the lives of their loved one. The recovery process can be healing for the entire family, and it is important to have care that addresses the specific needs of the family for effective treatment and long-term recovery. Parents and loved ones can help motivate people to access treatment and celebrate their successes in recovery. When parents are well-informed about addiction to alcohol and other drugs and the many pathways to recovery, they can be powerful advocates for the services and support that their children need to recovery.

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Alcohol and drug problems are pervasive in every community, affecting everyone either directly or indirectly. Public officials need to be educated about the reality of recovery because it is the solution to an issue that is important to constituents. They also need to know that there are constituents who are in recovery and what it means to them and their families. By opening a dialogue with elected officials and their staffs, you can start working with them to make treatment and recovery support services available to people who need help to get well. Let them know that recovery happens every day in your city/town and that there are effective solutions for people still struggling.

- Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to your local elected officials
- Invite them to participate in local Recovery Month events
- Invite them to attend and speak at activities and events where they can meet people in the recovery community and hear their stories first-hand
- Provide government officials with local statistics on the costs of untreated addiction in your community and information on effective recovery and treatment resources for people to find help
- Encourage local government officials to monitor alcohol and other drug use; the health care and criminal justice costs of addiction; alcohol and drug-related deaths and other indicators of the impact of untreated addiction in your community
- Encourage the establishment and support of Drug Court programs to reduce recidivism and provide an alternative to incarceration
- Encourage support for recovery community organizations, recovery housing, opportunities for safe and sober social activities, and other recovery-friendly policies





CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS

It is important to reach out to criminal justice and law enforcement professionals because they know first-hand that the vast majority of the people in the criminal justice system are there because of alcohol and drug problems, including addiction. When law enforcement professionals talk about the need for more opportunities for people to recover from addiction or support alternatives to incarceration for people with non-violent, drug-involved offenses, policymakers and the public listen. Providing effective treatment and recovery support for people while they are incarcerated can help reduce recidivism, make society safer, save taxpayer dollars, and improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities

Action Steps:

- Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to law enforcement officials
- Encourage them to participate in local Recovery Month activities
- Hold educational activities in local jails, courts, and law enforcement facilities
- Provide officials with information about how to screen inmates for potential alcohol and drug problems so they can get counseling, treatment, or join mutual support groups while incarcerated

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Business community leaders are a valuable resource to engage in your activities. Many have participated in recovery activities by sharing their personal recovery stories or those of employees or loved ones. Others have adopted recovery-friendly hiring and employment policies. They also are able to provide professional expertise or resources for planning and carrying out events.

Action Steps:

- Identify a recovery-friendly business person and ask them to partner in hosting your event. Ask them to involve their employees and business associates when appropriate
- Request professional services for an announcement or an event to improve awareness in the community about addiction and recovery and to expand recovery resources in your community
- Ask them to display The Recovery Bill of Rights and other informational materials in the workplace

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

It is important to reach out to healthcare professionals, like nurses and doctors, because they have experience working with patients, many of whom may need help for addiction or addiction-related problems. Healthcare professionals can educate and provide authority and expertise to advance prevention and recovery from addiction.

- Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to your local hospitals, clinics, community health centers, and physicians' offices
- Provide information about local treatment agencies and recovery resources so that they can make referrals if needed
- Encourage them to participate in local Recovery Month events
- Ask them to serve on public policy panels or speak at and attend community meetings





MEDIA

In addition to providing news coverage of your events and activities, local media outlets can be great partners in your activities. Many newspapers, radio, and TV stations and other media companies sponsor community events with financial and inkind support. Frequently, local news anchors, and radio announcers are well known in the community. They make excellent moderators and hosts for panels, rallies, and other events. Many recovery community organizations work with news anchors and other local media people who are in recovery and are willing to speak publicly about their recovery and moderate events. Media sponsorship or your event may give it more credibility and show local support.

Action Steps:

- Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to your local media outlets
- Invite local media outlets to sponsor your events
- Invite local reporters and news anchors to serve as moderators and hosts of your events
- Hold information meetings with reporters about addiction recovery issues and let them know that you can serve as resources for background information about addiction and recovery and connect them with individuals in the recovery community
- Encourage local media outlets to report on local Recovery month events

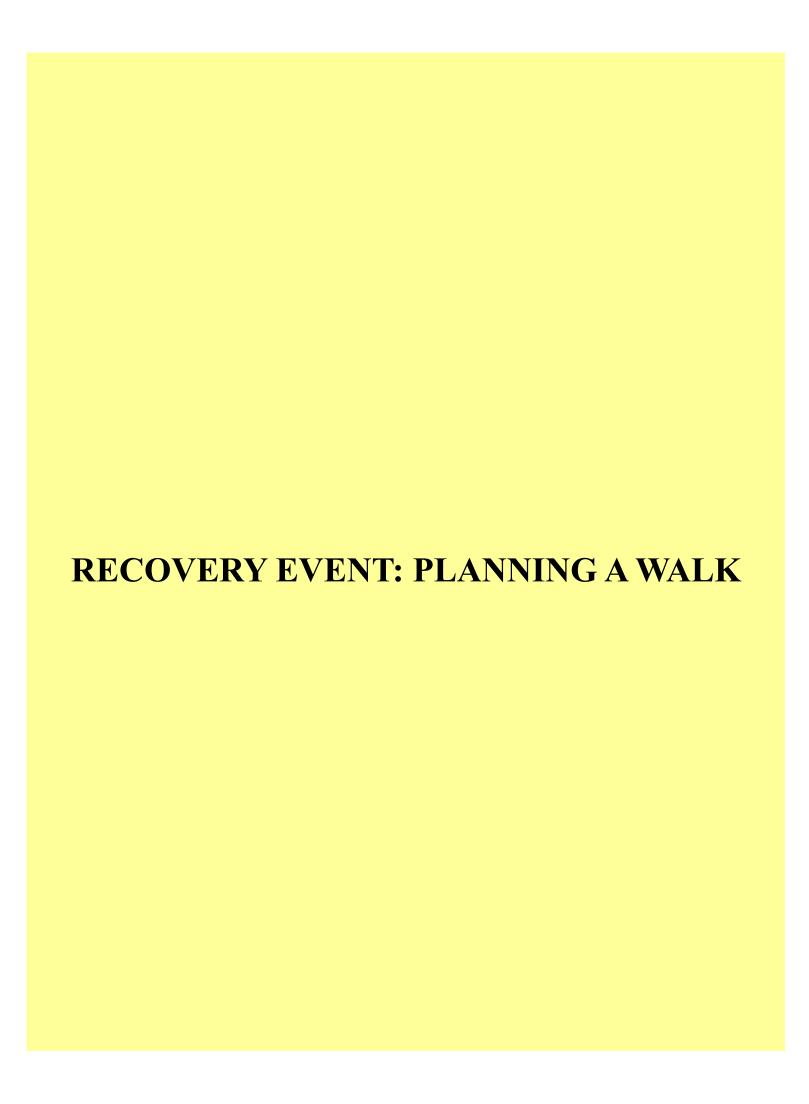
ADDICTION TREATMENT PROVIDERS

Addiction treatment is provided in a wide variety of settings—at publicly and privately-funded treatment centers, doctor's offices, and in clinics. Many of these treatment centers also have alumni associations, which family members and individuals in recovery belong to and participate in. Many treatment center employees are themselves in recovery from addiction.

- Send a copy of The Recovery Bill of Rights to your local addiction treatment providers
- Invite treatment providers to sponsor and participate in local Recovery Month events
- Encourage them to invite their clients and patients and their families to attend events







RECOVERY WALK SAMPLE PLANNING TIMELINE

6 MONTHS

- Design sponsorship letter
- Design sponsorship form
- All major sponsors contacted
- Determine scope of mailing and prepare mailing database
- Continue work on finalizing agenda—time frames/program
- Determine exhibitors and other displays
- Begin work on park setup—tents/food lines/registration/etc.
- Secure park/pavilion

5 MONTHS

- Begin work on registration process
- Develop food menu, contact possible donors and sponsors
- Actively seek sponsors
- Design T-shirts
- Design lawn signs

4 MONTHS

- Order lawn signs
- Design and finalize 'early registration' process
- Contact potential Team sources and cultivate
- Send out Save the Date flver
- Actively seek sponsors
- Develop walk brochure, flyer
- Order special shirts for committee
- Begin acquiring necessary permits

3 MONTHS

- Contact all previous sponsors
- Contact potential Team sources and cultivate
- Design registration form
- Determine all volunteer needs
- Work on survey
- Acquire quotes and order T-shirts

2 MONTHS

- Develop some personal media relationships
- Contact potential Team sources and cultivate
- Design evaluation form
- Finalize exhibitors and other displays
- Recruit volunteers
- Call for tents
- Order Port-a-johns

1 MONTH

- Full mailing: treatment provider invitations, teams & individuals
- Full promotion activities
- Make contact with media (at least 3 times)
- Finalize food menu
- Lawn signs distributed and displayed
- Assemble volunteer corps
- Contact local ambulance and police department
- Enroll participants

MONTH OF WALK

- Acquire all necessary permits
- Full promotion activities
- Finalize entertainment
- Make contact with media repeatedly
- Train volunteers
- Finalize food, space, and other logistics

POST WALK ACTIVITIES

- Develop report
- Finalize all accounting
- Design award ceremony
- Summarize evaluations





SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL TEAM CAPTAINS

Dear Potential Recovery Walk Team Captain,

Our organization is organizing a Recovery Walk and are asking you to join us in this dramatic display of support for recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction.

On [Insert day] September [Insert date], 2010 in [Insert place] hundreds of individuals will offer themselves as "living proof" that recovery is real. I am hopeful that you will commit to organizing a Team and serving as a Team Captain. Together we can generate the hope, and create a powerful message, that recovery is possible for anyone.

If you decide to serve as a Team Captain, and I am hopeful you will, you will have the responsibility of registering the Team by filling out the enclosed Team Registration Form, recruiting walkers, turning in all donations, distributing T-shirts to team members, and coordinating team walkers the day of the walk. Every Team member must give a minimum \$10 Personal Pledge for Recovery and be willing to collect other pledges. To be eligible for Team recognition, a Team must have at least 5 persons walking. (As an added incentive, any Team Captain that recruits 10 or more Team members receives a sweatshirt). Team Campaigns and members do not have to be in recovery, you only need to support recovery.

Next you may want to promote the event itself doing one or more of the following:

- Feature your Recovery Walk Team in newsletters or other publications
- Make announcements through email
- Hang Recovery Walk posters in employee lounges, cafeterias, near elevators, etc.
- Carry your Team Roster form and pledge Forms wherever you go
- Talk to your friends, neighbors, and acquaintances

As you recruit individuals to be Team members, collect their \$10 Personal Pledge for Recovery, get their T-shirt size, give them a Team Member Pledge Form, and have them collect donations. Record their name, address, and phone number on your Team Roster. Copy the Pledge Forms as needed. In order to expedite processing we ask that you turn in your Team Roster and all money collected at the special Early Registration Pizza Party on [Insert day], September [Insert date], 2010 at the [Insert place] where you can pick up your T-shirts as well. There will also be a Team Registration table the day of the walk, but as you might imagine, this day can get a little hectic. We encourage you to make use of the Early Registration.

In past years, most Teams have increased their visibility by carrying banners. Some have worn specially designed T-shirts or buttons. All participating Teams will be recognized in the newspaper and at an awards celebration.

I'm here to help you, so please don't hesitate to contact me at [Insert contact information].

In the Spirit of Recovery,

[Insert name]





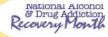
SAMPLE TEAM REGISTRATION FORM & ROSTER

Team Name:				
Captain's Name:				
Co-Captain's Nar	me [.]			
oo capiaii o nai				
Street Address:				
City:		State:	Zip:	
	_			
Phone:	Fax:	Email:		
Sponsoring Agen	cy/Corporation/Organiz	zation (if any):		

Team Roster
Team Name: _____
Team Captain: ____

** ***
* .* O.S.

Name, Address, Phone #	\$10 Personal Pledge	T-shirt size	Amount Collected
Example: Robert Smith, 444 Sunset Boulevard, Anywhere, CT 867-5309	*	XL	\$222
1)			\$
2)			\$
3)			\$
4)			\$
5)			\$
6)			\$
7)			\$
8)			\$
9)			\$
10)			\$
11)			\$
12)			\$
13)			\$
14)			\$
15)			\$
16)			\$
	Total		\$







PLANNING A COMMUNITY MEETING

To help you get started on planning your community meeting, we've outlined some basic key steps for you to think about.

STEP 1: FORM A PLANNING COMMITTEE

A good way to make your event as successful as possible is to form partnerships with a variety of organizations and other likely allies and work with them to plan and hold your event. These relationships will raise the profile of your community meeting and increase public awareness and attention. Your partners will also be able to help you establish your event's credibility and secure free services, such as audio visual equipment, space, or refreshments. All planning partners should be publicly recognized as supporters in your publicity and program. Some possible partners include your local or state agency responsible for alcohol and drug services, treatment and recovery centers, Drug Courts, educators, family groups, and faith-based organizations. It is helpful to recruit your planning committee as early as possible. The will help plan, manage and promote the event. Sometimes, more than one committee or subcommittees may be appropriate, such as a logistics committee or media committee who can work independently and report back to the planning committee.

STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Before organizing your community meeting, it is important to understand your community's unique issues, challenges, and opportunities for change. Review local data from a variety of sources and develop a community profile based on solid research. This information will help you know how to focus the discussion and give your program and presentations credibility. For example, it is important to understand the demographics, distinct culture, political environment, history of alcohol and drug problems, opportunities for treatment and recovery support services, and barriers to obtaining help in your community.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY OBJECTIVES

No two community meetings are alike. Your meeting's content, format, and objectives will depend on the particular concerns and needs that you and your partners have identified. For example, you may simply want to inform families and residents about recovery in your community and the need for treatment and recovery services; to introduce The Recovery Bill of Rights; or to hold a candidates forum. Other communities may want to use their community meeting as a call to action for new policies to allow more recovery homes to open or make recovery support services available to people reentering communities after incarceration.

STEP 4: DETERMINE FORMAT

Your format will depend on what you are trying to achieve. One of the most common formats is a briefing by a panel of three or four people and a moderator. The panel discussion typically lasts from 35-50 minutes and the question and answer period usually lasts about 30 minutes. The public and policymakers are the primary audience for this type of community meeting format.

Another format possibility is a media roundtable. This would typically include two to four panelists who bring different view-points to the issue. They have a moderated discussion designed to highlight the issue and then take questions from reporters. Reporters are the primary audience for a media roundtable. These media roundtables can be held in a small setting such as an office conference room or a classroom.

A third format is a policy panel. At a policy panel, the public presents their opinions. The panel members are community leaders who receive testimony from residents. Speakers give their accounts and urge the panelists to adopt certain measures or recommendations. For this format, the policy panel can convene after the meeting and issue its findings or recommendations based on what they have learned from the public.





LOGISTICS OF YOUR COMMUNITY MEETING

STEP 1: SELECTING THE PLACE AND DATE

Finding the appropriate location is an important step in the planning process and should be determined as early as possible. In some cases, the location can help set the tone for your meeting. It is important to select a place that is easy for residents and local media to get to. Some ideas are city hall, treatment centers, community centers, universities and colleges, and public libraries. The event date and time is equally important. When selecting a date, check out community calendars to avoid competing community events. When selecting a time, think about who you want to have attend, your target audience. If you want your friends and neighbors who work to attend, early evening is probably your best bet. If you need to know how many people will be coming, set up a way for people to RSVP.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY AND INVITE PANELISTS

Trusted, well-respected speakers are key to your meeting. They can be a draw for attendance and media coverage. But it's also important to include a local angle on your panel and people in long-term recovery who can tell their stories of hope and the reality of recovery. When you're putting together your panel, think about the issue that you'd like to address and what you want to get out of your event. The most interesting panels usually feature experts with a broad range of experience, such as academic researchers, community leaders, individuals with clinical backgrounds, elected officials, treatment provider, or counselors. In addition, include individuals in your community who have experience with long-term recovery, and/or family members.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY A MODERATOR OR FACILITATOR

The facilitator or moderator you select should be a well-respected community figure, such as a local educator, reporter, high-level official, or community leader. This person will be responsible for facilitating the panel discussion and fielding audience questions to panelists. Consider a moderator who is adept at collaboration and is not a polarizing figure. It is also a good idea to pick someone that has close ties or experience with the recovery community to help steer the conversation toward recovery solutions.

Who to Invite?

Some of the people who you can invite are key civic and political leaders, treatment and recovery community leaders, parents, educators, school administrators, law enforcement officials, and public health officials. It is also important to invite young people to attend. For example, you can identify school-based youth organizations and invite leaders who can help get the word out about your event.





LOGISTICS OF YOUR COMMUNITY MEETING

STEP 4: PREPARE PANELISTS AND MEDIA SPOKESPEOPLE

You'll want to make your panelists comfortable with their colleagues and with their role.

- Give them background information on the event—in writing—as soon as you have confirmed their participation.
- Schedule an informal prep session with the panel about one hour prior to the event.
- For all speakers, especially young people, find out if they and/or their parents are comfortable with their name being released to the media, and if they would like to be photographed or filmed.
- If you are inviting people who are in recovery, to speak it is recommended that they should have at least two years of recovery and have had experience and training in speaking publicly about their recovery.

It is also important to identify individuals who will serve as media spokespeople to provide comment for the press. These individuals could include local officials who can discuss the nature and the extent of addiction problems and the need for solutions in your community, people in long-term recovery, and citizens who can talk about the next steps that you will be taking as a result of your event.

STEP 5: STAFF YOUR EVENT

A key step in your community meeting planning is to identify people who will help out on the day of the event. Someone should be assigned to handle requests from the media; to greet and seat members of the audience and panelists; to distribute materials; to record comments and questions from the audience; to manage equipment set-up or to handle any other important logistical matters. This person doesn't need to be a paid staff member; it's a great job for a volunteer!

STEP 6: PREPARE MATERIALS TO DISTRIBUTE ON-SITE

Various materials can be found at: www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org and www.recoverymonth.gov.





HOLDING YOUR COMMUNITY MEETING

STEP 1: SETTING UP YOUR MEETING

To ensure a successful event, assign volunteers and staff to different tasks.

- Room set up: Some people should arrive early to make sure the room is set up properly and to make any last-minute adjustments. Check on tables, chairs, podiums, equipment, or visual displays. For large meetings, you may need to have a sound system, including table microphones for the panelists, as well as a stage or elevated panel table in the front of the room. Small meetings, with 25 or fewer attendees, work well with a roundtable setup, with panelists on one side of the table and attendees around the remainder of the table. Extra chairs can circle the perimeter of the room to accommodate additional guests.
- Sign-in/registration table: You will need to set up a sign-in table, where you can collect names and contact information for everybody who comes and hand out materials.
- Sign-in sheets: Remember to have separate sign-in sheets, one for the general audience and one for members of the media. This information will be invaluable as you conduct your follow-up activities and plan future meetings. You can also subscribe attendees to your organization's newsletter or listserv.
- Hand-outs: At the sign-in table, you may want to have agendas and other information, as well as press kits for reporters.

STEP 2: CONDUCTING YOUR MEETING

The meeting should begin with a welcome and introduction by the head or spokesperson of the host organization or planning committee. The welcome and introduction should last no more than five minutes and should explain the purpose of the meeting, welcome guests, and introduce the moderator. The moderator should then begin the panel discussion with a brief introduction of the issues that will be discussed, a review of the format, and introductions of each panelist. It usually works best to have all of the panelists speak and then each should have three minutes to answer a question from the moderator. The entire panel discussion shouldn't last longer than 50 minutes.

After the panel discussion, the moderator begins the questions and answer period, taking questions from the audience and fielding them to the appropriate panelist. Depending on the size of the audience, it may be helpful to set up a microphone in the center of the room or to walk over to audience members and allow them to speak into the microphones. Leave time to wrap up the session, summarize major points, discuss next steps and thank guests. The Q & A should last about 30 minutes.

STEP 3: COORDINATE MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Leave enough time after your briefing for media interviews. Generally, you should set aside 30 minutes after the question and answer period ends to coordinate the interviews between members of the media and your spokespeople. In many cases, media will request an advance interview, so make sure someone at your organization is always available to handle requests for media interviews.





WHAT TO DO NEXT

Your efforts do not end with the community meeting. In most cases, the meeting is a catalyst for future strategies, activities, and advocacy campaigns, To truly achieve your goal, you will need to take a number of follow-up steps beginning no more than two weeks after the event:

STEP 1: CONDUCT A "DEBRIEF"

No more than two weeks after your meeting, get together with key individuals, who were involved in your planning, to talk about how it went overall. It's also a good idea to get feedback from the panelists. Discuss whether you achieved your goals and put together a report giving an overview of the event and summarizing the problems and solutions offered by people who attended and the panelists. Your report should also include clippings of any coverage your event received in newspapers, as well as scripts from any radio or TV coverage.

STEP 2: DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Think about what the next steps could be and develop an action plan. Some possible ideas are policy recommendations, an advocacy campaign, information dissemination, or media outreach.

STEP 3: USING COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO BUILD YOUR ADVOCACY WORK

One of the most useful resources that you can develop from your meeting is the names and contact information of everyone who attended. This database can become your mailing list for future events and a source of potential supporters and volunteers, The database can also serve as a resource to identify people who might be interested in appearing before city councils or speaking at legislative hearings.



MAJOR THEMES

Here are three themes that you can use as you plan events and activities in your community:

1) EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO RECOVER FROM ADDICTION TO ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

The Recovery Bill of Rights is a statement of the principle that all Americans have a right to recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. You can use the principles and the fact that The Recovery Bill of Rights has been endorsed by a wide range of organizations to anchor an event. It explains that recovery is a process that requires time, patience, and support and calls for implementing public and private policies at the local, state, and federal levels to help individuals and families get the help they need, including access to effective treatment and to recovery support services.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

Identify an issue in your community that your organization believes needs to be addressed. For example, are people being discharged from detox and left to fend on their own without referral to treatment or access to recovery support services? Are there recovery high schools and alcohol and drug-free activities for young people in your community? Are there new reports and information on the numbers of people who are or are not getting treatment in your community and/or state that you can use to highlight the need for more treatment and recovery support services?

2) THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY IS ACTIVE IN OUR CIVIC LIFE

There is a national campaign, Recovery Voices Count, that is part of a national movement to educate friends, neighbors, and family about long-term recovery from addition to alcohol and other drugs by building recognition of the recovery community as a constituency of consequence. As recovery community organizations and recovery advocates register voters, educate candidates for public office about key issues and turn out voters in growing numbers, we will have an even greater impact on the lives of people who still need help with their addiction, people in long-term recovery, their family members, and communities.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

Attend candidate-sponsored events and ask questions of candidates. Invite elected officials once they are in office to participate in your events and activities. Hold elected officials accountable for positions taken while they were asking for your vote during campaign season.

3) THERE ARE MANY PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY

Millions of Americans have used mutual support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) to find recovery. A new generation of medications has been developed in the last decade that can help effectively treat addiction, especially when coupled with counseling and other recovery support. There are already several FDA-approved medications available to treat alcohol and drug dependence, including buprenorphine, naltrexone, methadone, and acamprosate. These new, effective treatment are an important addition to the arsenal of treatments and recovery supports that are helping people achieve long-term recovery.





SAMPLE COMMUNITY MEETING AGENDA

[Insert event title] - EXAMPLE: Making [Insert your city] Voices Count

[Insert Location] [Insert Date] [Insert Time]

Sponsored by:

[Insert your coalition or local group]

Introductions (5-10 minutes)

Planning committee member or key local leader welcomes everyone, tells them what they can expect from the event, and recognized special guests.

The Recovery Bill of Rights (10-15 minutes)

Review The Recovery Bill of Rights and what it means for the recovery community

Penal Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Moderator: [Insert name of moderator]

Local recovery community leader or a seasoned local media partner

Panelists:

Youth or Adult in Recovery

Topic: Putting a face on addiction and recovery—a story of hope

Recovery Advocate

Topic: Removing barriers and discrimination for people in recovery or with addiction to alcohol and other drugs

Medical Professional

Topic: What really happens in the ER on a Saturday night in [Insert your city]

Treatment Provider

Topic: Navigating the system to find quality treatment options in [Insert your city]

Elected and Appointed Officials (Your state Senator or Representative, state alcohol and drug abuse director, local mayor or other political leader)

Topic: The city/state strategy for supporting addiction treatment and recovery

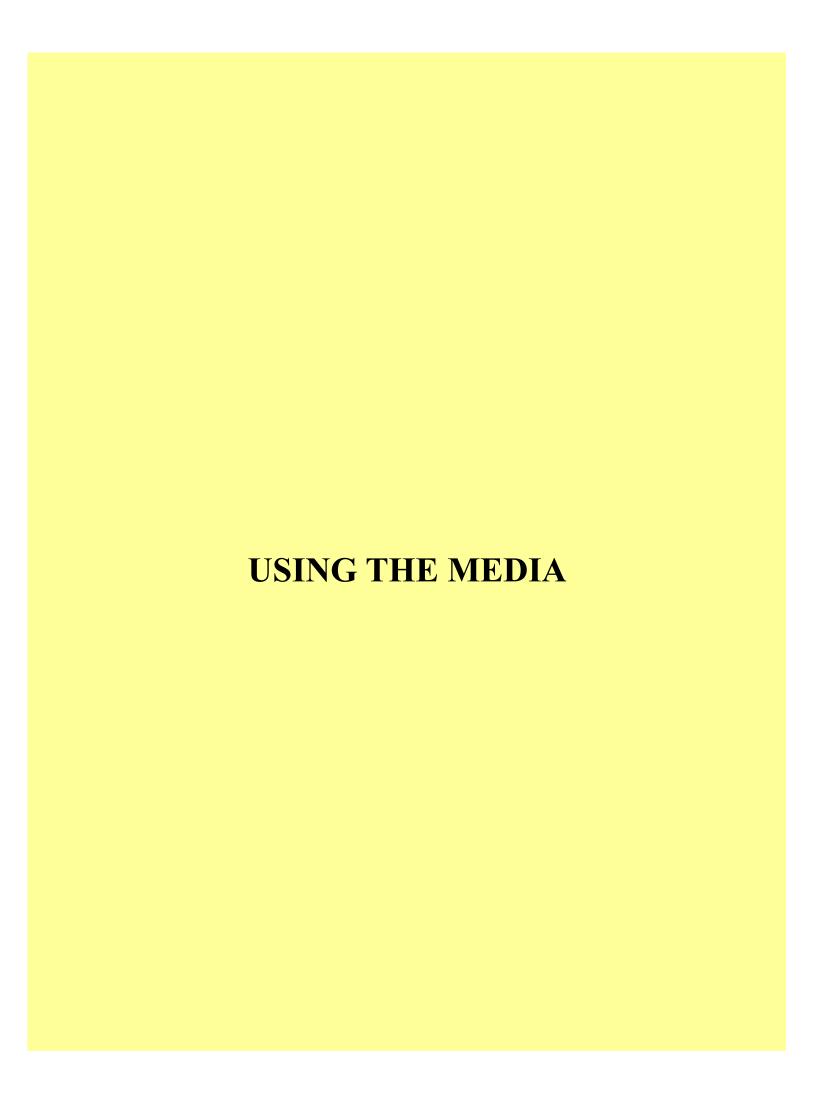
Q & A and Media Questions (10-20 minutes)

NOTE: Your planning committee will decide who the best speakers will be and what topics should be discussed. Remember to keep in mind the longer-term goals you have and what you hope to achieve from bringing all of these people together. Try not to have more than 4 people on a panel. With that in mind, here are some other potential panelists and topics:

- Faith Leader—Topic: The positive role the faith community can play to improve the environment for recovery
- Addiction Medicine Specialist—Topic: The new frontier of medications for alcoholism and drug addiction
- Business Leader—Topic: Why I hire people in recovery: Why I have a drug-free workplace: Why I have an EAP program
- Sheriff or other Law Enforcement official—Topic: Why people in my jail receive treatment and are connected with recovery resources in the community before they leave if they have an alcohol or other drug problem







MEDIA TIPS

The media has tremendous power to shape public opinion. Media coverage—or lack of it—can radically alter how the public thinks about people with addiction and the reality of recovery. Traditionally, media coverage has focused on the problem—addiction; not on the solution—long-term recovery. While we've made significant strides in improving coverage in recent years, we still have a long way to go in putting a face and a voice on long-term recovery from addiction in the media.

For all of your recovery advocacy work and campaigns, you will want to develop an effective media strategy to garner coverage, educate the public, promote the vision and mission of your organization, and increase the visibility of the recovery community. Your work in the media allows you to reach a larger segment of the population and get your side of the story out.

The media is a key source of information for the public and policymakers about the issues we care about. That is why it is so important to make it a priority to influence how the media educates the public about addiction and recovery. The media gives us an opportunity to inform, motivate, and persuade the public to support policies that make it possible for people to get the help they need and end policies that discriminate against people in recovery.

Many recovery organizations have been successful in getting media coverage of their activities. They have used tools like press releases, media advisories, op-eds, and radio announcements. They have also built relationships with reporters and other people who work in the media. Recovery advocates have learned that you need to do more than send out a press release to get good media coverage.

It is very important to get the most out of any conversation you have with the media. Reporters may only give you a couple of minutes to listen to what you have to say. In that short period of time, they will decide whether or not they want to write an article or do a story.

You will need to be persistent—making a phone call to a reporter to make sure they received your release and letting the reporter know how important your story is. Often reporters are interested in interviewing people for a story to give it human interest. They may want to interview you or someone you recommend. Interviews are a great way to go beyond what is in your press release and discuss other key messages.

In your recovery advocacy media outreach, you may find that reporters are interested in interviewing a variety of people—individuals in long-term recovery, family members, key opinion leaders in your community, a speaker that you have lined up for an event, or yourself. Make sure that you have been in touch with anyone that you are going to recommend to be interviewed before you give their name and contact information to a reporter. Take a few minutes to work with that person to think through talking points and how they want to talk about their recovery experience with the media.





TALKING ABOUT RECOVERY

Tips:

- Make it personal, so that we have credibility
- Keep it simple and in the present tense, so that it's real and understandable
- Help people understand that recovery means that you or the person that you care about is no longer using alcohol or other drugs. You can do this by moving away from saying "in recovery" to saying "in long-term recovery". Also, it is important to talk about stability and mention the length of time that the person is in long-term recovery.
- Talk about your recovery, not your addiction
- Help people understand that there is more to recovery than not using alcohol or other drugs and that part of recovery is creating a better life

MESSAGE OR LANGUAGE FOR A PERSON IN RECOVERY

"I'm [your name] and I am in long-term recovery, which means that I have not used [insert alcohol or drugs or the names of the drugs that you used] for more than [insert the number of years that you are in recovery] years. I am committed to recovery because it has given me and my family new purpose and hope for the future, while helping me gain stability in my life. I am now speaking out because long-term recovery has helped me change my life for the better, and I want to make it possible for others to do the same."

MESSAGE OR LANGUAGE FOR A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OF A PERSON IN RECOVERY

"I'm [your name]. My [insert son, daughter, mom, dad, friend] is in long-term recovery, which means that [insert he/she] has not used [insert alcohol or drugs or the name of the drugs that he or she used] for more than [insert number of years] years. I am committed to recovery because it has given me and my family new purpose and hope for the future. I am now speaking out because long-term recovery helped us change our lives for the better and I want to make it possible for others to do the same."

What is not in the message and why:

- "I'm a recovering addict [alcoholic]." —When people hear the words addict or alcoholic, it reinforces the idea of a revolving door. It says that either you or the person in your family is still struggling with active addiction.
- **Information about particular pathways to recovery**—The message does not mention a particular pathway to recovery, which addresses concerns that people in 12-step programs, such as AA, NA, Al-Anon, or other programs, may have about their anonymity.
- A definition of recovery—This message describes recovery, so that the person you are speaking with or the audience you
 are addressing, understands what recovery means: you or your family member is in long-term recovery and that
 others should have the opportunity to recover as well. You are not speaking out as a physician who is diagnosing a
 person who needs treatment referral or as an insurance company deciding whether or not someone's care should
 be covered.
- "Addiction is a disease." "Addiction is a health problem."—Research has shown that many people believe that addiction is a moral issue, not a health problem. Even when someone says that they believe it's a health problem, it's difficult for many Americans to truly believe that addiction is a disease or a health problem. Instead, go straight to the message that real people are in long-term recovery from addiction and their lives, and the lives of their families are better because of it.



TALKING ABOUT RECOVERY

Examples of how to use this messaging

1) Congress has been considering legislation to end insurance discrimination facing people with mental illness and addiction. Many Americans have no idea about this barrier facing people seeking recovery.

To use this messaging to talk about ending insurance discrimination, a recovery advocate would say:

- "I'm [your name] and I am in long-term recovery, which means that I have not used [insert alcohol or drugs or the name of the drugs that you used] for more than [insert the number of years that you are in recovery] years."
- "I am committed to recovery because it has given me and my family new purpose and hope for the future, while helping me gain stability in my life."
- "I am now speaking out because long-term recovery has helped me change my life for the better, and I want to make it possible for other to do the same."
- "Insurance discrimination denies people with addiction the same insurance protection as people with other health issues. As a result of this discrimination, many are unable to get the treatment and recovery support services necessary to achieve long-term recovery."
- "We must ensure that appropriate recovery support services and treatments are available to those who need them."
- "I am living proof that people can recover from addiction and make a better life for themselves and their families, but I would not have been able to do it without help and support.."
- "Unfortunately, many people are not so lucky. Many are denied access to services because their insurance companies will not pay for it or are not required to cover it."
- "Insurance discrimination for those who need help to recover from addiction needs to end and that is what we are fighting to do."
- 2) Nationally, more than four million Americans are denied the right to vote as a result of laws that prohibit voting by felons or ex-felons: in 48 states (with the exception of Maine and Vermont) and the District of Columbia prisoners cannot vote. In 36 states felons on probation or parole are disenfranchised, and in 11 states a felony conviction can result in a lifetime ban long after the completion of a sentence.

To use this messaging to talk about ending insurance discrimination, a recovery advocate would say:

- "I'm [your name] and I am in long-term recovery, which means that I have not used [insert alcohol or drugs or the name of the drugs that you used] for more than [insert the number of years that you are in recovery] years."
- "I am committed to recovery because it has given me and my family new purpose and hope for the future, while helping me gain stability in my life."
- "I am now speaking out because long-term recovery has helped me change my life for the better, and I want to make it possible for other to do the same."
- "I am one of more than four million Americans who have been denied the right to vote because of a criminal conviction while I was using drugs. People in recovery cannot fully participate in our communities without our right to vote."



INTERVIEW TIPS

GETTING READY

- **Know your message**: What do you want your audience to take away?
- **Develop three or four key talking points**: Prepare three or four key points to convey your message and weave these points into all of your answers. Think about what some of the possible questions might be and be prepared with your answers. Practice your talking points.
- Learn about the reporter and the news outlet: Find out about the publication or broadcast outlet, the reporter, and the subjects he or she covers. The type of outlet will have an impact on the sort of talking points that you prepare.
 Many news organizations have web sites that you can visit to read or watch previous stories.
- **Learn about the story**: Find out the goal the reporter has for the story and try to get a sense of the types of questions that you may be asked.
- Rehearse questions that you may expect: After you have a sense of what the reporter might ask you, practice your answers to these questions a few times. Even better, do it in front of a mirror, a friend, or a video camera.
- **Relax and focus**: breathing exercises go a long way toward helping you relax and calm jittery vocal chords. Get to your location 10-15 minutes early.
- **Chat with the interviewer**: Right before the interview begins, chat with the reporter to make sure you both have an under standing of the topics that will be discussed.

THE INTERVIEW

- Make your first words the most memorable: Interest levels go down quickly, so make sure that the first words out of your mouth are on message and hit some of your key talking points.
- Keep your audience in mind: The reporter you are speaking with is not your target audience. You are speaking to people as they watch the TV news in the living rooms, listen to the radio in their cars, or read a newspaper while drinking their morning coffee. Talk in a way that engages your audience—don't use jargon and always try to translate your 'news' to their lives in a way that's relevant and compelling.
- **Be enthusiastic**: Show your audience how interested you are in recovery. Now, it is time to share your compelling stories to readers, viewers, and listeners.
- **Keep your answers short and simple**: You don't have to keep talking! Most answers to questions should be 15-30 seconds long. You shouldn't feel nervous when no one is talking. Wait for the reporter to ask you the next question.
- **Control the interview**: You can steer the direction of your interview by remembering your key talking points and gently shifting back to them in all of your answers. If a reporter asks you a questions you don't want to answer, for example, what was it like to be an addict living on the street, you might say, "What I'm here to talk about is recovery and what it's meant to me and my family." If a reporter's question is vague, don't be afraid to ask for some clarification.
- **Localize and personalize**: Try to make the topic personal to the audience. Including local facts or stories can make an interview more compelling to the listener as well as the reporter

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Review: Take some time to think about your questions and answers to prepare for your next interview
- **Send follow-up information**: This is a good opportunity to send the reporter any information that you may have about the topics that were discussed in the interview and to build a relationship with the reporter for the future. Keep good notes of any promise you made to follow-up, and keep them.





PRESS RELEASES

PRESS RELEASES

One of the most effective ways to spread the word about your activities is to write and distribute an interesting press release to the media. The reason to issue a press release—sometimes called a news release—is to offer the media a compelling story to publish about the work that you are doing to support recovery in your community, whether they attend your event or not. Ultimately, the goal is to highlight the importance of the message of long-term recovery, recovery organizing, events and activities in your community, and to raise attention and awareness to this critical public health issue.

Tips for writing your press release:

- Put your organization's name on your release: Use your organization's letterhead if you have one. Make sure to include
 a telephone number and contact person. If you are doing a project with other organizations, remember to include
 information about those organizations.
- **Emphasize the most important details**: Begin with a headline in all CAPITAL LETTERS that summarizes the release and engages the media. The first paragraph should answer the five basic questions about what you are publicizing; who, what, where, when, and why.
- **Be captivating, yet concise**: A press release should not be longer than two pages, and a one-page release that is short and to the point is preferable.
- Highlight local activities and facts: Local media outlets and audiences are most interested in what is happening in your
 community. With that in mind, Use local statistics about the number of people in your state or region who need
 treatment and recovery support services to recover from addiction, the number of families affected (if available), and
 quote experts whose names will be recognized locally.
- State the facts, quote the opinions: Opinions should be written in direct quotes only.
- **Check for accuracy**: Be sure to verify all spelling, statistics, names, and titles in your press release. Ask someone else to proofread your press release before you send it out.
- **Include information about your organization**: Add a few brief sentences at the end of the press release about your organization.





SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

NOTE: The information in this press release template will give you an idea of how to put together your own press release. Please use it as a general guide and change it so that all of the information is about your event.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

[Name] [Phone Number] [E-mail Address]

[INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION] TO HOLD [EVENT NAME] TO RALLY AND DEMONSTRATE THE REALITY OF LONG-TERM RECOVERY FROM ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

[Insert name of speaker] calls for more opportunities for families and friends to get the help they need to recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs

[City/town name, state], [Date] – [Name of your organization] announced today that it is hosting [insert event name] to demonstrate that there are people from all walks of life and all ages who have their lives back on track because they are in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

This community event highlights the stories of real people in [Insert state or community] who are in long-term recovery from addiction and their stories of health and wellness. [Insert organization] hopes that their experiences will spur the development of support and encouragement for people who are still struggling with addiction.

"Lending a voice to raise awareness and help those who are seeking will help families, friends and the entire community," said [Insert name of a prominent local official], who will speak at the [insert event name] about how residents, treatment providers, educators and public officials can work together to support people and affected family members.

The event features [Add details of the event, perhaps a speech/story from a local resident in recovery, information about a specific theme, or panelists]

[Include this section if the event is associated with Recovery Month]

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month is observed every September to highlight the reality of recovery experienced by millions of Americans and the treatment and recovery support providers who have helped them on their road to recovery. Recovery Month is observed all across the country and is supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Sponsored by [Name and brief description of your organization], the [Insert event name] is part of this year's annual observance of Recovery Month. More information is available at www.recoverymonth.gov.

[Include this section if in association with The Recovery Bill of Rights]

The Recovery Bill of Rights is a statement of the principle that all Americans have a right to recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. It was developed and adopted by Faces & Voices of Recovery's board of directors and has been endorsed by allied national organizations. We call on all Americans and our elected officials to take action to build communities of recovery that will support the more than 22 million Americans and their families still needing help and end discrimination facing millions in long-term recovery. For more information about The Recovery Bill of Rights please visit http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/about/campaigns/bill of rights.php.



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE CONT.

[Include this section if in association with the Recovery Voices Count campaign]

The Recovery Voices Count campaign is part of Faces & Voices of Recovery's national movement to make it possible for even more people – friends, family and neighbors – to experience long-term recovery from addiction by building recognition of the recovery community as a constituency of consequence. As recovery community organizations and recovery advocates register voters, educate candidates for public office about key issues and turn out voters in growing numbers, we will have an even greater impact on the lives of people who still need help with their addiction, people in long-term recovery, their families and communities. For more information about the Recovery Voices Count campaign, please visit www.facesandvoicesorrecvoery.org.

"It is time that we support those who need our help. Real people in our community are seeking long-term recovery from addiction," said [Spokesperson, title, organization]. "Let us join together and speak out to make recovery possible for even more of our friends and neighbors."

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RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT

Radio announcements are yet another way to attract the media to your recovery events. You can use them to share recovery stories and raise awareness and interest in your recovery advocacy activities. A radio announcement is typically about an upcoming event and is read on the radio. It should be distributed to radio producers in your area three to five days before the scheduled event. You can coordinate with a local radio DJ, public affairs director, or station manager to promote your event and mention key messages abut your organization on the air.

Tips for Distributing a Radio Announcement:

- E-mail and/or fax the radio announcement to morning show producers at local radio stations.
- Follow-up with a phone call to make sure they received it.
- Depending on the radio format and whether or not you have someone who can be a spokesperson, you may want to consider asking the radio show producer if they would like to interview someone from your organization live to promote your event or activity.

SAMPLE RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT

ATTENTION: MORNING SHOW / NEWS DIRECTOR / PUBLIC AFFAIRS / TALK SHOWS

CONTACT: [YOUR NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL ADDRESS]

"Rally For Recovery [Or event name]"
[Date, time and place]

[Insert city/town] CITIZENS COME TOGETHER TO RALLY FOR RECOVERY! [Or name of local event]

CALL ON CANDIDATES TO SUPPORT POLICIES THAT WILL HELP PEOPLE

RECOVER FROM ADDICTION

[OPENING]

This election year, candidates for public office will hear from [Name of your town] residents about the need for help for people seeking recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs at a Rally for Recovery! in [Name of your town]. They will have a chance to support and be with friends and neighbors who know what life means when people find recovery from addiction.

Community advocates, parents, educators, and political leaders are coming together to demonstrate that there are solutions for people and families in our community and ask candidates to support opportunities for people to get well in [Name of your community].

[Name of your organization] has joined with [Name of partnering organizations] in hosting a Rally for Recovery! on [Insert date, time, place]. Join us in a day of celebration and come hear from [Name of candidates who have agreed to attend]. There will be live music, food and activities for families. Join us in this celebration and help us let our friends and neighbors know that people can and do recover from addiction.

[CLOSE]

For more information on the [Insert city name] [Insert event name], visit [Insert URL for organization] or call [Insert a phone number]. I'm [Reporter's name].



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/OP-ED

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The letters to the editor section of your local newspaper is a great forum for getting our message out to local citizens, elected officials, and other members of the media. More people read the letters to the editor section than almost any other part of the paper. Letters to the editor show that an issue is of concern in the community and are an excellent tool for education.

Guidelines for getting your letter to the editor printed:

- Before writing you letter, review the newspaper's policy on letter to the editor to find out how long letters can be and where to send them to.
- Submit your letter by e-mail whenever possible.
- You can send you letter to weekly community newspapers as well as daily newspapers.
- You must include your name, street address, and phone number. Editors will not run anonymous letters and will often contact you to verify that you wrote your letter.
- Type the letter—double spaced.
- Do not be disappointed if your letter does not get printed. Newspapers receive many letters every day and cannot print them all. Look for another opportunity to submit your letter using a different angle.

OP-ED (OPPOSITE EDITORIAL)

Op-Eds appear opposite the editorial page in a newspaper and are similar in form and content to an editorial, but represent opinion of an individual writer who may or may not be affiliated with the publication. Supported by facts and figures, Op-Eds are longer than letters to the editor; one of the reasons that fewer of them are published in newspapers. Usually they are 600-800 words long. Try to use the opportunity of local media attention to addiction and recovery issues when you think about the timing for submitting your Op-Ed.

Tips for your Op-Ed:

- Send your Op-Ed to the editor of the paper, just like you would with a Letter to the Editor.
- Try to think of a catchy title, that lets the editor know what your main point it. It may be changed, but it will help them think about the point-of-view that you want to get across.
- You will be trying to persuade readers of your point of view; therefore, you should use compelling, easy-to-understand language.
- Send your Op-Ed by e-mail with a cover letter.
- You must include your name, street address, and phone number. Editors will probably contact you before running your Op-Ed.
- Type the letter—double spaced.
- Do not be discouraged if your Op-Ed isn't printed. You can always shorten it and re-submit it as a letter to the editor!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/OP-ED

Tips to help you write your Op-Ed:

- Stick to a single idea to effectively persuade readers and keep their attention focused on the most important issues.
- **Use a local story of recovery** to add personal touch to your Op-Ed. If possible, also include a family member's healing journey.
- Plan out your Op-Ed to stay focused and keep it structured.
- Speak your mind. You are being asked to contribute because you have something important to say.
- **Back up your opinions** with up-to-date facts that are relevant to both the field and your community. Statistics or study results add credibility to your argument, but try not to overwhelm readers by burying your story in numbers.
- **Be concise and captivating** by using short, yet compelling words. Newspapers are written for readers at a fifth-grade level, so remember to avoid using terms and acronyms unfamiliar to those outside the field.
- **Include your full name** and a brief description of who you are and what you do at the end of the Op-Ed, illustrating what makes you an expert on the subject that you are writing about.

Placing an Op-Ed: Start early when submitting to your local newspaper. Call the paper and ask for the name of the editorial page editor, then, contact that person to introduce yourself and your issues.

Submitting your Op-Ed:

- Practice and know exactly what you will say before calling the editor. Tell the editor that you are interested in submitting an Op-Ed regarding a particular issue/subject and ask about any specific guidelines. Also, it helps to ask for guidance that would help ensure placement, such as specific topics that would be of interest to their readers, including personal long-term recovery stories or specific research.
- Understand the submission guidelines and strictly adhere to them. Many newspapers prefer submissions via e-mail, fax, or an online form on their Web sites, while some may ask you to send it via U.S. mail. Following their preferences will increase the chances of getting your Op-Ed placed. When you send it in, include a cover letter that reminds the editor who you are and remind them about any previous contact you may have had. Highlight—clearly and concisely—why the subject is important to the newspaper's readers.
- Make a follow-up call approximately one week after submitting your Op-ed to give time for the editor to review it.
 Confirm that it was received and answer any questions the editor may have. Offer to modify it if the editor has reservations about publishing it or suggestions on making it more compelling.



SAMPLE OP-ED

Approximately 600 Words
Please Adapt With Your Own Story and Experiences.

[Date]

MEET ONE OF THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS IN RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION

WHY THE RECOVERY BILL OF RIGHTS IS IMPORTANT TO ME AND SHOULD BE IMPORTANT TO YOU

In the beginning, I had no idea of how my addiction to [Insert alcohol or other drugs] was affecting me and my family. Later, it was clear that my addiction had taken control over my life. Something had to change. I know that I am not alone in this community as a person in long-term recovery from [Insert alcohol or other drugs] and I hope that my story helps others in [Insert community/location] to get the help they need to recover.

Alternative opening paragraph if you are a family member:

In the beginning, I had no idea how addiction was affecting me and my family. Later it was clear that [My daughter/son;husband/wife;mother/father's] addiction had taken control over our lives. Something had to change. I know that I am not alone in this community in experiencing the joy of seeing someone recover from addiction and I hope that my story helps others in [Insert community/location] to get the help they need to recover.

Please modify the text below to fit your situation:

While over 22 million Americans still live with addiction, there is hope for recovery. I know because I'm living proof that with the support of my family and friends and good care, I [Insert family/friend relationship here] was able to get well. Everyone who is still struggling with addiction should be treated with dignity and has the right to recover. That's why I believe a new public statement called The Recovery Bill of Rights, is so important.

The Recovery Bill of Rights was developed to encourage people who need help to get it and to empower people such as myself to speak out. Addiction is a public health crisis that affects one in four American families. Until we join together to address this crisis, the costs of untreated addiction will continue to mount – in deaths, escalating health costs, criminal justice costs, and broken families.

Navigating my path to recovery has given me a new life. Resources such as The Recovery Bill of Rights gives me hope that everyone in our community can enjoy lives free from addiction to alcohol and other drugs if we stand up for our rights. The Recovery Bill of Rights was developed by Faces & Voices of Recovery; a national organization made up of people in recovery, their families, friends, and allies.

[Tell your personal recovery story here]

There are many resources available to help people recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs – from mutual support groups to healthcare professionals. It is a journey that can take many different paths – through religious faith, spiritual experience, or secular teachings.

The Recovery Bill of Rights, along with my story, is a call to action for our elected officials and community leaders to increase support for people to recover from addiction and their families. We need to break the cycle of addiction in order to create a healthy and just society.

Today, recovery is even more possible because of the growing numbers of effective treatments and recovery supports. Long-term recovery has changed my life and the lives of those around me and now [Insert something about your recovery experience].



SAMPLE OP-ED CONT.

I know that there are other people in our community who can have success in long-term recovery. We're very fortunate that recovery and treatment programs can be designed specifically for each individual and even their families, to ensure that they find a recovery path that works for them.

[Use this paragraph only if local or state statistics are available]. In our own community of [City, region or state], [Number] people live with addiction, and countless numbers of them do not receive the same access to health care options that they would if they had other chronic disorders, such as diabetes or heart disease. These people are all around us – our neighbors, co-workers, friends and families.

Letting people know that they have a right to recover and expanding resources and access to treatment and recovery services will encourage more people to seek help. [Name of organization] encourages everyone in [City] with an alcohol or drug problem to exercise their rights and get on the road to recovery. And for people who have stopped using alcohol or other drugs, we need to make sure that we accept them back into our community and do not put up barriers that would make it difficult for them to get a job or housing.

Please join me in encouraging those in need of help to seek treatment and recovery. [Name of your organization] has joined with organizations across the country in endorsing The Recovery Bill of Rights. Please help us make those rights a reality.

The Recovery Bill of Rights (abbreviated)

- 1. We have the right to be viewed as capable of changing, growing
- We have the right as do our families and friends to know about the many pathways to recovery, the nature of addiction
- We have the right, whether seeking recovery in the community, a physician's office, treatment center or while incarcerated, to set our own recovery goals
- 4. We have the right to select services that build on our strengths
- We have the right to be served by organizations or health care and social service providers that view recovery positively
- 6. We have the right to be considered as more than a statistic
- We have the right to a health care and social service system that recognizes the strengths and needs of people seeking recovery
- 8. We have the right to be represented by informed policymakers
- 9. We have the right to respectful, nondiscriminatory care from doctors
- 10. We have the right to treatment and recovery support in the criminal justice system
- 11. We have the right to speak out publicly about our recovery

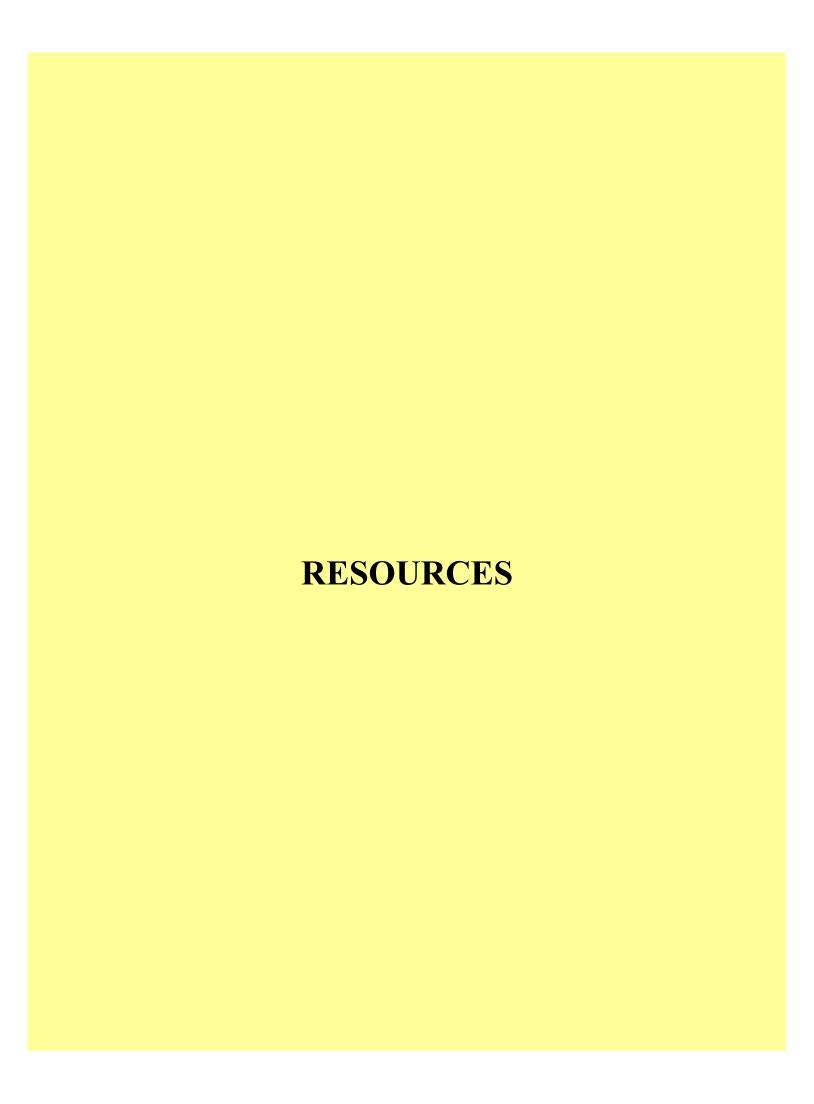
For the entire Recovery Bill of Rights please visit:

http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/about/campaigns/bill of rights.php

[Your full name] is [Insert your title/affiliation or other role].







RESOURCES

NORTH DAKOTA

www.nd.gov/dhs/services/mentalhealth www.nd.gov/dhs/prevention

- Free resources at the Prevention Resource and Media Center



NATIONAL

www.recoverymonth.gov

www.pfr.samhsa.gov

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

www.therecoveryproject.net

www.addictionsurvivors.org

www.samhsa.gov

www.cadca.org

www.niaaa.nih.gov

www.nida.nih.gov

www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov

www.phoenixmultisport.org/index.php

